

INL employee to advise next U.S. president on cybersecurity

Idaho National Laboratory employee Michael Assante has been asked to serve on a commission advising the next U.S. president about ways to enhance cybersecurity in the United States. The official announcement came in November from Rhode Island U.S. Rep. James Langevin, who chairs the U.S. House Homeland Security [Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, CyberSecurity and Science and Technology](#).

The 31-member commission will examine existing plans and strategies to assess what a new administration should continue, what it should change and which new policies should be adopted or new authorities sought from Congress. Issues for consideration will include infrastructure protection, software assurance, federal agency cybersecurity and information security initiatives in both the public and private sectors. The group's recommendations will be presented to the newly elected president in January 2009.

Langevin and Texas U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul will co-chair the commission, along with former National Security Agency Director Admiral Bobby Inman and Microsoft Vice President Scott Charney. Assante will be joined by a host of government and industry cybersecurity experts from organizations including Oracle, Verizon Communications and the FBI.

"I am honored and excited to serve on the commission and will work hard to identify critical steps the next president can take to enhance the security and prosperity of the United States," said Assante. "The commission is convened at a time when our nation is at an important crossroads, challenged by the need to balance information security with productivity and public safety."

Assante's participation on the [Commission on cybersecurity for the 44th President](#) comes on the heels of his October selection by Information Security magazine as one of the year's [top information security professionals](#).

In 2006, he joined forces with the SANS Institute and the New York Office of cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection to develop procurement guidelines for utility executives seeking to implement stronger cybersecurity measures its operating systems. The latest revision of the procurement guidelines will be released this week at the SANS Institute's Process Control and SCADA Summit in New Orleans, La. Assante will also speak to summit attendees about critical infrastructure protection.

Since joining the laboratory in 2005, Assante has been highly regarded as one of the nation's leading experts in cyber- and infrastructure security, and has been credited with raising international awareness with U.S. ally nations about infrastructure cybersecurity. He is a former naval intelligence officer and has also served as vice president and chief security officer for American Electric Power.

Assante recently published a technical paper entitled "[Infrastructure Protection in the Ancient World](#)," in which he draws a comparison between ancient Rome's attempts to protect its aqueduct system, and how the United States can apply its tactics to protecting our national assets.

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An INL engineer examines a SCADA vendor's system inside INL's SCADA Test Bed.

Scientists and engineers at INL are tackling infrastructure cybersecurity head-on by developing new technologies, security training and tools to increase the resiliency of the nation's critical infrastructures.